

Children's Commission  
Relative Caregiver Discussion  
6-4-12



It is part of the mission and purpose of R.O.C.K- Raising Our Children's Kids, to build bridges for advocacy. Connecting Kinship Caregivers and The Department of Children and Family Services through a strength and solution based approach to promote our common goals of respect, partnership, understanding, compliance and permanency. It is with that spirit that we submit the following kinship needs.

1. Initial and on-going Kinship Caregiver and Kinship Service Agency contact
2. Kinship Advocacy Network
3. Mandatory kinship training for DCFS CSW's, SCSW's and Administration
4. The privatization of Kinship Centers with co-location of DCFS staff or Kinship Service Agencies co-located in DCFS centers
5. Kinship Caregiver education
6. Issues surrounding new law requiring warrants before detention

### **1. Initial Kinship Caregiver (KC) and Kinship Service Agency (KSA) contact**

**Goal:** To provide KC with immediate services, resources, support and education

**Focus:** Build on strengths by utilizing existing Kinship Service Organizations/Agencies

**Tasks:** 1. DCFS enter into MOU/Confidentiality Agreement with KSA

2. DCFS develop a Kinship Release of Information Form. Include form in placement packet

3. DCFS develop policy and procedure for DCFS/ KSA cooperation; train administration & staff

a) Monthly, DCFS forward new kinship placement list (by SPA's) to KSA

b) CSW's allowed to contact KSA for KC in need.

Note: When ASFA and Kinship Division were one entity, SPA 1 had a very successful pilot project.

ASFA CSW would FAX KC information to KSA and an advocate would meet CSW at KC

home to assist with needed beds, immediate support, resources, referral to kin education, etc.

4. DCFS standardize policy & procedure for TDM referrals:

a) Add Kinship check off box to Family Centered Referral Form. (This was deleted during form revision.)

b) TDM scheduler screen each referral and question CSW for possible kin involvement.

c) Mandatory KSA invitation to all Kinship TDM's

d) KC information given to KSA when TDM invitation is sent, as is done with DMH.

5. DCFS modify Agency-Relative Caregiver Placement Agreement to clarify KA can discuss case information when working with KSA, support groups, etc. Also add Prudent Parent information under RC agrees to section.

6. DCFS office allow KSA a prominent place in lobby for KSA information, also staff break room

7. KSA information packet included in Kinship Placement Packet. (SPA 2 has a sample KSA packet)

### **2. Kinship Advocacy Network**

**Goals:** 1. To provide KC with ongoing services such as case management/understanding/compliance, resources

2. To work in partnership with DCFS for system improvement

**Focus:** Utilize existing KSA with MOU/Confidentiality Agreement

**Tasks:** 1. DCFS develop policy and procedure for DCFS/KSA cooperation regarding the utilization of Kinship Advocates

a) Kinship Advocates (KA) can assist KC with meetings, etc. with CSW's and chain of command. KA and CSW can work together to assist KC.

b) KA/KSA bring reoccurring issues to the attention of Quality Service Review and DCFS Director.

c) DCFS Training Division assist KSA to develop KA training program.

d) KA's allowed to sit in on local DCFS office CSW trainings

### **3. Mandatory kinship training for CSW's, SCSW's and administration**

**Goal:** To provide CSW's, etc. with understanding around Kinship dynamics, needs, challenges and the positive outcomes for children when family connection is a supported priority.

**Focus:** Utilize existing KSA for training

**Tasks:** 1. Reestablish kinship training hours in the Academy

2. DCFS office administration allow kinship information/education presentations at staff meetings and unit Meetings

#### **4. Privatization of Kinship Centers with co-located DCFS staff or co-location of KSA in DCFS centers**

**Goals:** To provide a welcoming environment where KC's will feel safe to come for assistance and support.

Centers to be used for support group, TDM's, visitation, education/training, gathering place for kin, storage for beds, furniture loan program, clothing exchange, small food bank, tutoring, etc.

**Focus:** Utilize existing KSA's to open new kinship centers and as possible convert existing DCFS Kinship Centers to private Kinship Centers. Co-locate KSA representative in DCFS Centers until Centers can be privatized.

Example: Antelope Valley focus group outcomes-

##### **Private Kin center:**

Minimal restrictions on Center usage  
Home like setting, friendly gathering place  
Kin greeted by other kin, welcome open setting  
Minimal security issues  
24 hour access for emergency kin needs  
Free access to copy, FAX, computer  
Available for homework help, tutoring  
KSA support group  
Open for night support group  
Child care during training/education  
Bed/furniture storage for give away or loan

Food pantry  
Home like setting for kin visitation  
Kitchen facilities  
Access to CSW if co-located

##### **Service Example:**

##### **Private Kinship Center:**

Kin's utilities going to be turned off.  
Emergency fund or age 55 & over same day funds  
1 on 1 kin immediate attention

##### **DCFS kin center:**

Challenges with security, liability & funding use restrictions  
Office like setting/strip mall  
Kin greeted through glass window, buzzed in for security  
Security issues associated with DCFS  
9-5  
No access  
??  
DCFS support group  
closed at night; funding issue  
?? Possible liability issues  
No. Center can only be used for programs. Wait for Goods & Services request to be processed if funds are available  
No. Liability issue.  
No visitation  
??  
Access to CSW

##### **DCFS Kinship Center:**

Kin will no longer meet ASFA. Could take 30+ days to resolve

#### **5. Kinship Caregiver Education**

**Goals:** 1. Provide KC with timely access to standardized Kinship Orientation.

2. Make KO mandatory (within 3- 6 months of placement?)

3. Re-institute KEPS with referral to existing KSA supports groups.

4. Continuing education in education groups in cooperation with Grandparent As Parents and Community Colleges.

**Focus:** Utilize existing original 6 hour Kinship Orientation. This KO was written by and for kin caregivers.

This KO has been tested and well received by kin for 14 yrs.

**Tasks:** To be set by DCFS education group when meetings resume.